

## **Substance Abuse and the Workplace Data**

### **National Data:**

- According to the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use & Health, of 16.7 million illicit drug users aged 18 or older, approximately three quarters were employed either full or part time. Illicit drug use is defined as any use of drugs in the nine different categories: marijuana/hashish, cocaine/crack, heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, and non-medical use of prescription-type pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives. The same survey reported that 19.4 million adults were classified with dependence or abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs, which include non-medical use of prescription-type drugs. Of this number, 14.9 million or just over three quarters were employed.
- The 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) findings indicate that the vast majority of drug users work. Of the 16.6 million illicit drug users aged 18 or older in 2002, 12.4 million (74.6 percent) were employed either full or part time. In addition, most individuals classified with substance dependence or abuse were employed either full or part time.
  - Rates of current alcohol use were 61.8 percent for full-time employed adults aged 18 or older in 2002. Furthermore, the majority of the nation's adult binge and heavy drinkers were employed. Of the 51.1 million adult binge drinkers in 2002, 40.8 million (80 percent) were employed either full or part time. Similarly, 12 million (79 percent) of the 15.2 million adult heavy drinkers were employed.
- According to the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, 1 in 12 full time workers reported heavy alcohol usage during the past month and 1 in 13 reported illicit drug usage during the past month. Illicit drug users were twice as likely to have multiple employers during the past year and were 2 1/2 times more likely to skip work.

### **2005 Hazelden "Making Recovery America's Business" Survey**

- The 2005 Hazelden "Making Recovery America's Business" Survey also found that 57 percent of employees dealing with addiction in their family said they had missed a deadline or had their attendance suffer as a result; 46 percent said they had made errors in judgment they would not have otherwise made, and 14 percent said they had been so distracted that they forgot safety or security procedures at work.
- One in three workers said they have seen coworkers become distracted, unproductive, or miss work because they were dealing with an alcohol or other drug problem in their family. One quarter, or 26 percent, of the 1,190 employees surveyed by Hazelden reported that a family member was struggling with substance abuse or addiction. Of these employees, 42 percent reported being adversely affected at work because of their family member's addiction. Family substance abuse also led to a number of other problems in the workplace, such as missed deadlines, errors in judgment or forgetting safety or security concerns. And while nearly half of the participants said they would use their company's Employer Assistance Programs (EAP) if they had a family member struggling with addiction, only 19 percent said their employer offered any such program.

### **Drug Testing Reducing Injury Incidents**

In a study, investigating the efficacy of workplace drug-testing programs in reducing injury incident rates and workers' compensation experience-rating modification factors (MODs) within the construction industry the following was found:

- Companies with drug-testing programs experienced a 51 percent reduction in incident rates within two years of implementation of the program.<sup>i</sup>
- Companies that drug test their employees experienced a significant reduction in their workers' compensation experience-rating modified factors.<sup>ii</sup>

The National Institute of Drug Abuse Report, "A Critical Evaluation of the Utah Power and Light Company's Substance Abuse Management Program: Absenteeism, Accidents, and Costs" concluded:

- Drug users were five times more likely to have a vehicle accident;<sup>iii</sup>
- Drug users were at fault in 80 percent of the accidents, compared to 50 percent for the non-drug using control group;<sup>iv</sup>
- The average cost of vehicle accidents by drug users was 10 times higher, even though a \$40,000 accident caused by a drug user was excluded from the comparison.<sup>v</sup>
- In 1986, approximately 52 fewer vehicle accidents were recorded than in 1985. At an average cost of \$2,465 per accident, UP&L saved \$130,152.<sup>vi</sup>
- In 1987, approximately 61 fewer vehicle accidents occurred, resulting in a savings of \$150,858.<sup>vii</sup>
- Drug users averaged 19.5 more hours of sick leave annually and had an average of 45.1 more hours of unexcused absences. In total, drug users missed 64.6 hours or eight more working days a year.<sup>viii</sup>

#### **Maine Data:**

- **The 2004 OSA Maine General Population Drug and Alcohol Use Survey Report:**
  - Of the 4000 respondents: Three-fourths (75.4%) of the 4,000 respondents surveyed indicated that they were employed during most of the 30 day period preceding the survey.
  - Of respondents who are currently employed (N=3,017), 82.5% indicated that they are employed full-time (35+ hours per week), while 16.6% reported that they are employed on a part-time basis (<35 hours per week). More than one-half of respondents (56.6%) reported having used alcohol in the month preceding the survey. Males (61.5%) were more likely than females (51.8%) to report this behavior. In addition, respondents who are employed full-time (63.7%) or part-time (53.8%) were more likely than those who are not in the workforce (39.9%) to indicate that they have used alcohol in the past month.
  - One-fifth (20.0%) of respondents indicated that they have participated in binge drinking in the past month (as defined by five or more drinks in a day for males and four or more drinks in a day for females). Males (24.6%) were more likely than females (15.6%) to report this behavior. In addition, respondents who are employed full-time (22.5%) or part-time (20.7%) were more likely than those who are not in the workforce (13.5%) to indicate that they have participated in binge drinking in the past month.
  - Four percent (4.0%) of survey respondents reported having used marijuana in the month preceding the survey.
  - Nearly seven percent (6.6%) of survey respondents reported having used marijuana in the year preceding the survey.
  - Five percent (5.0%) of respondents who worked in the past year reported feeling the effects or after-effects of alcohol use while at work in the past 12 months. One percent (1.0%) reported the same for drugs.

- Only one percent (1.1%) of those who worked in the past year indicated that they actually used alcohol during work hours or on work property.
- Approximately 44.7% and 45.5% of respondents indicated that they would be “more likely” and that it “would make no difference” respectively, to want to work for an employer that tests its employees for drug or alcohol usage “following a work-related accident”; 7.9% and 1.9% indicated that they were “less likely” and “didn’t know / refused” respectively.
- Approximately 33.4% and 52.6% of respondents indicated that they would be “more likely” and that it “would make no difference” respectively, to want to work for an employer that tests its employees for drug or alcohol usage “on a random basis” ; 12.6% and 1.5% indicated that they were “less likely” and “didn’t know / refused” respectively.
- Of the **total male sample base**, the highest prevalence rates of past year binge drinking occurred in the 21 to 24 year old group (66.0%) and the 25 to 29 year old group (62.4%), while those in the 18 to 20 year old category reported a substantially lower incidence rate (41.3%). The lowest past year binge drinking rate occurred in the 50 to 64 year old age group (26.6%). However, among **recent drinkers** (those who have had alcohol in the past year), male respondents in the 18 to 20 year old group had the highest past year binge drinking rates (84.8% [18-20] versus 79.2% [21-24], 75.5% [25 to 29], 57.1% [30 to 49], and 37.2% [50 to 64]).
- Among **recent binge drinkers** (those who have participated in binge drinking in the past month), male respondents in the 18 to 20 year old group had the highest binge drinking rates (74.1% [18-20] versus 68.3% [21-24], 64.5% [25 to 29], 54.4% [30 to 49], and 45.1% [50 to 64]).
- The highest reported lifetime illicit drug use rates were for marijuana (40.5%) and hallucinogens (10.8%). Reported use of cocaine (7.9%), unprescribed painkillers (3.8%), unprescribed stimulants (3.4%), unprescribed tranquilizers/sedatives (2.7%), and heroin (2.4%) was less common.
- There are very low incidence rates of self-reported alcohol and/or drug use at the workplace. Five percent (5.0%) of respondents who have worked in the past 12 months indicated that they have gone to work feeling the effects or after-effects of alcohol in the past year. Only 1.1% reported using alcohol during work hours or on work property. The reported incidence rates of the other behaviors included in this section of the survey were less than or equal to 1.0%.
- Of respondents who have worked in the past 12 months, the highest prevalence rates of respondents working while feeling the effects or after-effects of alcohol occurred in the 21 to 24 year old group (13.8%) and the 18 to 20 year old group (10.8%). Rates for the other age groups decreased with age (7.5% [25 to 29], 3.9% [30 to 49], and 1.8% [50 to 64]).
- Just over one-fourth (26.2%) of respondents who are currently employed reported that their workplace or business tests its employees for drug or alcohol usage. While 66.8% of respondents indicated that their workplace or business does not test its employees for drug or alcohol usage, 6.9% said that they were unsure of their employer’s drug and alcohol testing policy.

- **OSA 2004 Report on the Economic Costs of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Maine, 2000**

- The total estimated annual cost of substance abuse in Maine was \$618 million. If divided by Maine's 2000 Census population count, that's \$485 for every man, woman, and child in Maine. That same report found that the estimated cost of lost productivity due to alcohol and drug abuse in Maine was \$99.2 million.
- Approximately \$69.8 (72%) of these costs were attributed to alcohol abuse and \$27.6 million (28%) were attributed to drug abuse. Substance abuse among males accounted for \$72.3 million or 74% of total costs in this category. The highest morbidity cost, \$28.6 million, was due to alcohol disorders among males age 25-44. Total costs related to lost productivity in 2000 were an estimated \$97.4 million and represented

16% of the total cost of substance abuse in Maine.

- Substance Abuse also has serious consequences that affect individuals and their families in ways that cannot be quantified through economic analysis. In 2000, it was estimated that 541 persons in Maine died of causes related to drug or alcohol abuse, resulting in a potential loss of 11,738 years of life, and thousands more suffered from substance-related illnesses, injuries, and domestic violence.

- **Employee Assistance Programs and Small Business - ME DOL/BLS and 2004 OSA General Population Drug Alcohol Use Survey:**

- 76% of Maine businesses have 9 or fewer employees and of these businesses, 65% do not have access to an EAP or counseling program for employees through their workplace. Another 11% of employees of these small businesses, "don't know" if they have access to an EAP or counseling program for employees who have alcohol or drug-related problems.
- 89% of Maine businesses have 24 or fewer employees and of these businesses, 56% do not have access to an EAP or counseling program for employees through their workplace. Another 13% of employees of these businesses, "don't know" if they have access to an EAP or counseling program for employees who have alcohol or drug-related problems.
- 98% of Maine businesses have 99 or fewer employees and of these businesses, 45% do not have access to an EAP or counseling program for employees through their workplace. Another 16 % of employees of these business "don't know" if they have access to an EAP or counseling program for employees who have alcohol or drug-related problems.

- **Methamphetamine in Maine**

- According to researchers, methamphetamine (meth) is most common on construction sites and in manufacturing plants, where workers must stay alert during long hours of repetitive work. Use of the drug is also growing in the entertainment, sales, retail, and legal professions.<sup>ix</sup>
- According to a study conducted this summer by Quest Diagnostics Inc., which processes more than 7 million employee drug tests a year, the number of workers testing positive for meth increased 68 percent last year.<sup>x</sup>
- Meth's low cost, about \$100 a month, makes it affordable for many workers. However, the accidents, absenteeism, and health costs associated with meth are becoming costly for businesses. Preliminary findings of research examining the economic impact of meth use in Benton County, Ark., finds that meth use cost employers \$21 million last year, or \$42,000 per affected worker.<sup>xi</sup>
- The state's Office of Substance Abuse reports that those treated for methamphetamine addiction jumped from about 100 annually to 160 in 2004.<sup>xii</sup>
- There is an increase in the numbers of people arrested for possession of meth. In the 7 1/2 months since July 2004, 13 people were arrested - up from the dozen arrests in the previous 12 months.<sup>xiii</sup>
- Police last year shut down methamphetamine labs in locations as diverse as Westbrook, Augusta and Machias. Each year in Maine more meth labs are discovered, from none in 2002 to one in 2003 to three in 2004.<sup>xiv</sup>

Work place prevention programs and strategies not only save employers a great deal of expense in lost productivity, increased workman's compensation and health insurance expenses, it also contributes to reducing the cost of substance abuse in our society. Data on cost-effectiveness of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), published by the Substance

Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, indicates that a savings to investment ratio may be as great as 15:1. For every dollar spent in preventing illicit drug use, there is a fifteen-dollar savings in dealing with the consequences of drug use and addiction. The bottom line: substance abuse prevention makes good business sense, and leads to a healthier and wealthier society for all.

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<sup>i</sup> Gerber, Jonathan K., Yacoubian Jr., George S., "An Assessment of Drug Testing within the Construction Industry", *Journal of Drug Education*; 2002, Vol. 32 Issue 1, p53; and "Evaluation of Drug Testing in the Workplace: Study of the Construction Industry", *Journal of Construction Engineering & Management*; Nov/Dec2001, Vol. 127 Issue 6, p438, 7p, 7 charts, 3 graphs

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> A Critical Evaluation of the Utah Power and Light Company's Substance Abuse Management Program: Absenteeism, Accidents, and Costs," *Drugs in the Workplace: Research and Evaluation Data*, National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1989.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>ix</sup> Meth Moves from Parties to the Workplace, *The Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 13, 2004

<sup>x</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xii</sup> In Maine, addictions to drug on rise, *The Portland Press Herald*, March 28, 2005

<sup>xiii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xiv</sup> Ibid.